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Letter dated 21 November 2007 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to write to you regarding the continuation of the efforts of my Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)-affected areas, the former President of Mozambique, Joaquim Alberto Chissano. As you will recall, on 30 November 2006, my predecessor informed the members of the Security Council of his decision to appoint former President Chissano as Special Envoy for the LRA-affected areas, with a broad mandate to address the implications of the activities of LRA in the region, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, southern Sudan and northern Uganda (S/2006/930).

Since then, the peace process between the Government of Uganda and LRA has been proceeding steadily and remains on track under the facilitation efforts of my Special Envoy, in close cooperation with the mediation of the Government of Southern Sudan and with political support provided by five African ambassadors (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania). Last June, the parties reached an agreement on the principles of accountability and reconciliation (agenda item 3 of the peace talks), following which the Government of Uganda conducted nationwide consultations on the modalities of implementation of the agreement. LRA has now started its own consultation process. Recently, an LRA delegation visited Kampala and signed, with the Government of Uganda, the Fourth Addendum to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, which will be reviewed by late January 2008.

It is anticipated that the parties will resume talks by the end of December 2007 or in early January 2008. Peace talks are then likely to continue over the course of the year, as modalities for the implementation of agenda items 2 (Comprehensive solutions), 3, 4 (Ceasefire) and 5 (Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) still have to be discussed.

With the renewed commitment of the parties to the peace process, it is crucial that my Special Envoy continue his good offices in the region. He has received substantial support from the United Nations country team, including the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) in discharging his mandate. Lately, I enhanced this support by establishing a temporary Unit in Juba, situated within UNMIS, and a temporary Liaison Office in Kampala that serves as a focal point for his activities.

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I was encouraged by the Security Council's press statement of 13 November 2007, in which members expressed their hope that the facilitation role played by Mr. Chissano would continue. I was particularly pleased at the strong support that members of the Council expressed for the activities of my Special Envoy.

Since December 2006, the Special Envoy's facilitation efforts have been funded entirely through my extraordinary and unforeseen expenses account, and this line of budget cannot be extended beyond 31 November 2007. Currently, the mandate of the Special Envoy's temporary Liaison Office is scheduled to expire at the end of November 2007. In order to allow the continuation of the facilitation role of Mr. Chissano, I wish to propose to the Security Council that the mandate of the temporary Liaison Office be extended and the Office upgraded to a special political mission for the Special Envoy for the LRA-affected areas for a duration of one year through 31 December 2008. This would enable my Special Envoy to move the peace talks forward until their completion. The special political mission would inherit the existing mandate of the temporary Office and would end its activities upon the conclusion of the peace process.

The Office would continue to perform the following activities:

(a) Assist the Special Envoy in developing a relationship of mutual trust among the parties and the mediation and build their confidence in the political process;

(b) Assist the Special Envoy in coordinating efforts by regional players, donors and civil society organizations;

(c) Follow up the peace talks on behalf of the Special Envoy and promote a peaceful agreement between the Government of Uganda and LRA;

(d) Coordinate the activities of the five African ambassadors/guarantors to the peace process;

(e) Serve as a focal point for the Special Envoy's regional activities, including the coordination of international activities in support of the talks;

(f) Liaise with all stakeholders in Uganda and in the region;

(g) Monitor and analyse internal and regional political and security developments in Uganda and in neighbouring countries;

(h) Coordinate the activities of the Unit in Juba;

(i) Maintain close consultation with MONUC and UNMIS on security and military issues in connection with the Special Envoy's mandate.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon